WORDS OF RECONCILIATION.

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A FEW PLAIN WORDS.

Some of our subscribers have written expressing their regret that this magazine is likely to be discontinued. One or two have made offers of pecuniary help. For such kindness and sympathy we are supremely thankful. If a sufficient number of friends were to offer aid in the support of this work, and we were convinced that they were prompted, not by personal consideration, but by a real interest in the magazine as a needed agency for good, it would remove a serious obstacle in the way of continuance.

But even in that case we would not be free to go on without making it plain to them, and to all our friends, that the attitude of this magazine must continue to be one of steadfast devotion in the pursuit of truth wherever it may lead us. Under the restraint of supreme loyalty to the Word and Spirit of God, and under the high obligation to sincerely and lovingly serve our brethren, we must remain unfettered in our liberty to inquire and to teach along any line of truth in which we believe that God is leading us, without the necessity of being always consistent with the past, or even with ourselves. We have learned something in the past. We hope that God has much to teach us in the future. And

we do not ask or desire support from any who are not willing to trust us in the use of the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free. What the Church needs now especially is a magazine that shall be absolutely untrammeled by fealty to any party or set of opinions, or by a desire to win the favor of men, and that shall feel itself, not only free but charged to speak the truth with which it may be put in trust, not as pleasing men but God which trieth our hearts.

We are not surprised that some of our readers have followed us with hesitation, and even with reluctance, into some of our more recent fields of inquiry. We do not profess to have found the final truth on any one of these great themes. But we do claim to be reverently and honestly seeking it, and that the best interests of the Church and of mankind demand this kind of search. It must needs be that the best of us will sometimes stumble. But unless some one lead nothing will be found out. The mistakes must be tolerated for the sake of the final issue. If there are those who are willing to share with us in the support of this magazine on such a mission, and who have confidence that we will not abuse the trust, we are willing to still contribute to it our time and thought and labors.

We were not entirely clear a month ago as to what we ought to do. We are now, as then, willing either to suspend or to go on as the way of duty is made plain. It is not yet plain.

We therefore reserve the final announcement of the future of this magazine until the next number, the closing one of the volume. Meanwhile we should be glad to hear from our friends who can at least help us with advice, or it may be with dissent. In their light we may also see light.

UNIVERSALISM—ITS TRUTH AND ITS DEFECT.

Our thanks are due to the Rev. T. Allin, a clergyman of the Church of England, of Weston-Super-Mare, for a copy of his recent volume entitled *Universalism Asserted on the Authority of Reason, the Fathers, and Holy Scripture.* The work is introduced with a preface by Edna Lyall, the well-known author of *Donovan,* etc., and by a highly commendatory letter from Canon Wilberforce —the bearer of a noble name—whose eloquent discourses upon the occasion of his recent visit to Philadelphia many of our readers will remember. These facts are significant as indicating that, while repudiating denominational Universalism, eminent clergymen of the Church of England openly advocate its leading doctrine, while numbers hold it who do not openly avow it. The same secret belief we know to be not infrequent among the clergy of the American Episcopal Church.

Mr. Allin's book is the ablest and most convincing assertion of that doctrine we have yet met with. It is especially strong in its presentation of this argument from reason—that any other solution of the problem of the world leaves the dominion of evil in part unsubdued, and Satan, to that extent, still master of the field. And it is also valuable as furnishing a thorough digest of the teachings of the Fathers on this subject. It is well known that some of the most distinguished of the early Fathers, notably Clement of Alexandria and Origen, plainly taught universal restoration; but most of us are unaware how

generally this hope for all mankind gave tone to the Christian teaching of the first four centuries. It is true, indeed, that extracts from the sayings of these men do not always agree, and that they may sometimes be quoted against themselves. The prevalent opinion that one might use pious fraud in order to move men to repentance induced them often to suppress the hopeful and to exaggerate the damnatory side of truth. Just so we may often hear in modern orthodox pulpits utterances which consist only with the gospel of the widest hope. How far these involve also pious fraud the men that utter them must determine. But of the fact, that in the early days Christians generally were tolerant of restorationism, and that many of their most eminent teachers held it, there can be no question.

But this book is equally strong in the Scriptural argument. It bristles all through with pointed texts. Orthodox Christians are generally quite ignorant what strong support may be derived for this view from Scripture. Its proof-texts, to say the least, fairly balance the array of texts on the other side. All that is necessary to give them weight is to assume that when the Bible says "all" it means all.

It was, indeed, the universalistic teaching of the Bible that first arrested our attention when we began the special study of the subjects to which we have given prominence in this magazine. We saw that there were two sides of Scripture teaching on this great question, and that orthodoxy, and especially the standards of our own Church, did great injustice to the universalistic side. We saw, in the first place, that a resurrection had been provided for

all, and that, too, by the redeeming work of Christ, and that to degrade His work of raising men from death into a divine mode of perpetuating their existence in endless torment was a blasphemous libel and an absurdity. We were forced to conclude that the resurrection of all meant mercy for all. And yet still the weight of teaching on the other side would not permit us to rest in universalism.

As our readers know, our way out of the difficulty was to locate the Scripture teaching about the sinner's future punishment in the death-state or hades, where it properly belongs, thus excluding the idea of a second probation there, and finding hope in his case only after the sentence of death had been exhausted upon him, and the grace of God was left free to bestow upon him another gift of life through a resurrection from the dead. And yet, beyond the new opportunities conferred by this new gift of life, we thought we saw the possibility of a second death, and that the danger of this final end for those whose resurrection would be one "of judgment" would be proportionate to desert. And for those suffering the second death we saw no hope of a second resurrection. Convinced that there can be no immortal life except that which is divine, this form of the doctrine of conditional immortality came to our relief, with its picture of a universe purged of all evil through the final destruction of all incorrigibly wicked men and angels.

From the earliest times there have been found those who rested in this as the final solution of the world-problem. And if the number and standing were known of those who now, even in the orthodox Churches, and against their creed, accept this as the probable issue, we would be sur-

prised. So strong is the repugnance among the best and wisest Christians to the dogma of endless existence in suffering, so irreconcilable is it with our highest and truest conceptions of God as drawn from Scripture and as traced by His Spirit on our hearts, that nothing but the sternest fidelity to what is falsely conceived to be the requirements of Scripture would keep any Christian for a moment content under the dark shadow of such a despairing view of God and of man.

There is therefore a strong basis of truth and of tradition underlying univeralism. The Scriptures warrant, and the irrepressible instincts of the human heart cry out for some form of it. Nor does the doctrine of annihilation satisfy this craving. Reason still rises in protest against a view that leaves a large portion of the race forever under the dominion of death, or that awards to them a resurrection only for an increase of punishment, to be followed by a repeated death from which there is no further awakening.

Our readers have observed that we have recently been much occupied with yet another solution of this grave question—one which makes room for both the retributive and redemptive sides of Scripture teaching, and which accepts also what is essentially true in conditionalism. The basis for this new eschatology is found in a truth which is a basal one in all Scripture, namely, that the redemption and ultimate perfection of the human race are wrought out along the line of progress in life which pervades all God's works. The law of preservation and transmission and progress to higher forms through a seed is universal. It is this principle which dogmatic universalism has hitherto

overlooked. And here lies its chief defect. It has told of universal salvation, but it has not properly discriminated between that which is worth preserving and that which must be cast away; between that divine humanity which, both in the individual and for the race, is the seed of blessing, and the husk of fleshly manhood in which it is enwrapped and which cannot inherit the kingdom of God. And it has failed to perceive how this law of redemption through a seed binds the human race organically in one, so that the individual can advance toward perfection only as the race is lifted on to higher levels, insomuch that the law of sacrifice for the race becomes the law by which alone men enter into life. We also must "lay down our lives for the brethren." In every form of created life there is a typical form, an ideal perfection toward which it strives. To this end it produces seed after its kind, and dies that the seed may live and carry on the struggle toward the goal. This ideal life of the plant or animal thus lives on through successive lives. In man, the ideal is the image of God. This is the immortal groundwork of his being, and toward this goal the true being of man advances until he becomes a true son of man, which is the son of God. In this ideal manhood the permanent individuality of man resides. He has no other basis for immortality. This constitutes his real self. In most men this self lies below the sphere of the external life and its surface self-consciousness.

Now, universalism is true, so far as it asserts that this divine self in every man can never perish. It must finally take on that form of perfect manhood which is the true image of the invisible God. But it does not follow

that every personal form in which that image may have been embodied in its progress toward perfection shall live forever. Only those features of personality in every man's life which take on the divine stamp can abide forever. Every man will attain to immortal life and blessedness just so far as his present life is pervaded and molded by the Spirit of God.

It follows, therefore, that while the divine image in every man is preserved and goes on to perfection, the present personality in which it is enshrined survives as the temple for this image, only so far as we have wrought into it the gold and gems of a divine character. And we can well suppose that where these are conspicuously lacking and the personal being and self-consciousness has been submerged in sin, there the loss in death may amount to a loss of personality. The man "loses his soul," he "loses himself and is cast away."

From this point of view we see that universalism is wrong in holding up before each personal man, however degraded, the hope of final salvation. It has the right to assert that there is a germinal divine nature in every such man, which cannot be destroyed, and that the Lord will seek His own in every man until He find it. But the danger is in encouraging wicked men to believe that its rescue will carry with it the salvation of the unfit personality with which their present consciousness is identified, and around which they have accumulated their life-treasures and hopes. The intrinsic man will be saved. But all they have known of themselves is extrinsic. Their thoughts and aims and pleasures have been limited to this outward carnal sphere. They do not know themselves as

children of the divine Father. It must then be said of them and to them, that in the only character in which they know themselves they must be lost: their end is destruction.

It is on the basis of such ideas as these that universalism and orthodoxy, both of which are true in part, must finally be reconciled. Orthodoxy must give up its horrid dogma of eternal torment and its dreary, wretched vision of a universe in which evil and the devil and his trophies are as eternal as God, and universalism must learn to distinguish between the immortality of the divine sub-conscious self which lies at the root of every man's being, and that of the personal forms of manhood in which this image of God may for the time lie hidden. The one must be saved, the other may be lost; yea, must be, just so far as it is an unworthy temple for God to dwell in forever. And as Scripture recognizes this double self in every man, this gospel of hope for all must carefully guard the old and sinful self in every man against the delusion that there is any heaven in God's universe prepared for *him*, or even any form of continued existence. His "end is to be burned."

THE EVOLUTION OF IMMORTAL MAN.

In the previous article we have sought to distinguish between the final perfection of the divine image in every man, which must, by the very law of its being, reach its goal of new manhood in Christ, and the salvation of the imperfect human beings, through which it may seek personal expression in its progress toward this goal. These

transient forms of existence are those in which humanity is now clothed—and with them the self-consciousness of most men is identified. But they do not fully represent the true and permanent self.

We have insisted, also, that the treasures of life accumulated in these forms, and especially the supreme treasure of personal identity, will be either lost or saved as this present existence moves in the sphere of sin and death, or in that of righteousness and life. If the personality be rooted and grounded in Christ, it becomes immortal and a temple of the divine nature forever.

It follows also that through whatever forms of previous existence this ideal man may have passed in his progress toward perfection, there must remain treasured up in him whatever there was in them worth saving. All these past phases of experience are remembered and gathered up in the final personality in which God's image is completed. And such a perfected man becomes henceforth a channel of divine power and saving grace to his human brethren who are yet struggling toward the goal, and to the race. They are made kings and priests unto God.

This view gives us a very different outlook upon the world of humanity around us than the ordinary one. The earth is replete with forms of human life in all stages of development. A large proportion of these are semi-bestial savages and roughs in whom the divine image is most obscure. They live according to the course of this world and fulfill the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and are by nature children of wrath (Ephes. ii, 2). Above these there are men of all grades of civilization and refinement. And yet, in all, the animal nature remains, however much

it may be repressed and chastened. There is also the germ of a divine nature, and in some this has been already quickened by the touch of the Divine Man who is head over all. But it is altogether preposterous to suppose that each one of these savage and semi-barbarous masses is now here on the earth on final trial for an eternal heaven or hell. The idea is without warrant of Scripture and it is absurd. Most of these are wholly unfit for the purposes of such a trial. They are human beings in various stages of education in the great school of God. And what we see is not the real essential man who is being trained for immortality, but transient forms of corrupt and perishable life through which he is passing in the process. The immortal man, who is to be the crowned administrator of the whole kingdom of nature and the lord of all its realms of life, must come up to these heights by all these lowly and stumbling steps. The better nature which is now in any one of us has been trained through all this range of experience. We are the heirs of these ancestral lives reaching back to primeval man, and even beyond. We are carrying them on toward perfection. The heaven or hell into which they passed are found in the heights and depths of this common human experience through which we are now passing, with its joys and its miseries. Whatever about these lives was evil has been swallowed up in death—burnt up in God's consuming fire. Whatever there was of truth and righteousness and goodness has been treasured up and must be brought out in the summing up. Whatever of good became incorporated into these personalities gave them so far permanence. And the eternal man, who was the real individual behind them all, shall count it all

among his treasures and build it all into the living fabric of his personal eternal manhood.

In this way whatever is fit to be saved of every human personality that has ever lived will be saved. When we reach this height of being every step along the toilsome path and every phase of experience will be remembered. The long past now submerged in our memories will all be recalled. An eternal past will be open to the divine man as well as an eternal future. And the mystery of these countless hordes of men, half animal, half human, and of these advancing grades of human life in which splendid qualities of genius, and of art, and lofty attainments in knowledge and tender traits of loveliness appear, and yet associated with a nature that still strikes its roots down into the base and sensual, will all be made clear. No intermediate state needs to be imagined for the perfection of these natures. No distant heaven and hell is needed for their rewards and punishments. This present world of struggling humanity will be seen to have furnished all the arena needed for the trial and discipline and judgment of human souls. The only immortals beyond it are those who have passed safely through this conflict, and who have now become the saviours of their brethren. The crowned Head of these immortals is the eternally begotten Son of God. But to them also has He given power to become the sons of God. And their final dwelling-place with God shall be in a heaven accomplished here on the earth, and in a temple of humanity fully redeemed and cleansed. For even their advances in glory can only be made with the advancement of the race toward this goal: so true is it that we are members one

of another. And so deep is the mystery of God, that their manifestation as His sons must wait until the creature also is ready for deliverance from its bondage to corruption into the liberty of their glory.

SOME CONCLUSIONS.

With this view of human nature and individual responsibility it is seen,

1. That character-building is the great business of life and the way of salvation.

2. The relation of Jesus Christ to human salvation is not that of a proxy who does something for every man which no man is required to do for himself, or who puts away man's sins in a way that makes it unnecessary for himself to put them away. It is that of a Divine Captain who has shown man the way of obedience and of victory, and who, through death out of the fleshly nature and resurrection by the spirit, has raised humanity in Himself to its true point of evolution into the divine, and so has become the channel of this same death to sin and quickening to life for all the sons of men.

3. His victory for all the sons of men is proof of that prime law of solidarity of race, in accordance with which each son of man who becomes a son of God receives power in his measure to lift up other sons also. So that brothers in prison and captives in sin and death await deliverance through them.

4. These prison-houses are not in a remote hades, but in the recesses of this flesh-and-blood humanity. This carnal nature builds around us all the thick walls which shut us in away from light and liberty, and it is in them that are bred the demons of our torment. Any man who walks the

streets of a crowded city will see these walls of hell in the battered and degraded bodies of men and women, behind which fettered spirits rage and suffer and sigh to be set free.

5. There is a nascent immortal nature behind every one of these bruised forms which must emerge and pursue its path toward perfection until the goal be reached. The work of salvation which emancipated souls must do for their brethren is to arouse this slumbering nature, to bring them to feel the touch of divine sympathy and power in the person and work of Jesus the Christ.

6. The uplifting of any human soul helps all the rest. Humanity is one organism, insomuch that no one can reach perfection except as he helps others along the path. And the perpetuated sin and degradation of any part of the race keeps the whole back from its high goal. If one member suffer, the others must suffer with and for it, and if one rejoices, all rejoice. Here is the highest motive for individual and social and national efforts to help men and the whole body of mankind along the path of progress. Selfishness, greed, crime, poverty, and disease abound in the world not only as the result of individual sin, but of corporate sin. Every man must work out his own salvation not only by the exorcism of these evils from his own breast, but from the body of society. In the long run, we all stand and fall together.

7. The world owes its present progress and a vast unknown debt to the heroes and victors in this struggle who are now crowned in light. And their highest happiness is that they have won the right to minister to and succor those of us who are following in their footsteps, for even they, without us, would not be made perfect.

A NEW VIEW OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE UNJUST.

The Bible speaks of two kinds of resurrection, one of which it defines as "of life," the other as "of judgment." We have seen that the resurrection of the just is made complete by the emergence of the perfected man out of the flesh-and-blood condition—the corruption which cannot inherit the kingdom of God—into that estate of divine manhood which is supreme over all God's works. It follows, therefore, that the unjust man, who is not prepared for this change, must fail to be delivered at death out of this condition of earthy manhood. Scripture knows of but two patterns of manhood—the earthy and the heavenly. The man in whom the heavenly type is not yet formed must therefore, if recovered from death, be raised again only as an earthy man. We were formerly disposed to think that this resurrection of the unjust took place in some future and unknown state. We now suspect that it takes place here on this earth, and that it is a process in harmony with what goes on in the realm of life around us. The "resurrection of judgment" must be the restoration to another life on some earthly sphere, which is necessarily the sphere of trial and judgment. And the judgment must proceed on the basis of previous character. "Every man must receive in body according to deeds done" (II Cor. v, 10. See Greek). We know of but one way in which God has provided for the judgment of men, and it is the way wrought into the constitution of the world and of man's nature.

They must "be judged *according to men in the flesh*, that they may live according to God in the spirit."

If any one tells us that this is nothing but heathenism —the old world-long and world-wide doctrine of re-incarnation, our reply is, we care not what you call it; we believe it is true according to both the book of nature and of God. Resurrection is necessarily re-embodiment. We defy any one to prove from Scripture that it knows of any other kinds of human bodies than the two of which Adam and the risen Christ furnish the patterns. If a man, therefore, be not fitted for the higher he must abide in the lower. If there be another life at all for unjust men, it must be a return to the earthly life. In no other way can they exist again as *men;* for a disembodied spirit is never a man. Moreover, as we have said, the only arena of discipline and judgment suited to man is this one of flesh and blood. And this is the one which God has provided. Here man is in bondage to corruption. Here he must struggle and contend. Here he must suffer, and here he may be shut up in torment.

No other hell is needed than this. And no other training-ground can furnish greater stimulants and higher motives to escape from the dominion of those carnal lusts which war against the soul. The fact that men are ordinarily oblivious of any previous experience of earth-life proves nothing. We pass every night through strange experiences of which we lose all consciousness the next morning. And in contrast with unseen and eternal realities, the whole of life here is a dream. Moreover, the laws of heredity by which God ties one life in with another are best explained in this way. All these lives must be trans-

mitted from one generation to another along the earthly plane until prepared for translation to the heavenly. Scripture, instead of branding this view as heathenish, confirms it. For its prime law of resurrection is "To every seed his own body," whether it be celestial or terrestrial; and these are the only two kinds it speaks of. If in the corruption of man's dying nature there be not sown the seed of the new and divine manhood, there remains only the seed of the Adam-nature. And its only product can be a fleshly body.

And both science and Scripture teach that there is but one way by which such bodies are formed out of the womb of nature—the way of natural birth. The unjust, therefore, must be restored to natural manhood in this one way. And there could be no object in their restoration, except for further discipline and trial. This is their resurrection of judgment. When this matter is once understood, all the difficulties raised by the theory of a post-mortem probation are at once cleared away. Those who insist that the only sphere on which men are put on trial for eternal life is this earthly sphere are seen to be right. And all those Scriptures which view resurrection as uniformly a blessing, and as God's way of redeeming the race, and also those which speak of resurrection in its pre-eminent aspect as the consummation of this redemptive work are at once explained.

THE SEED OF BLESSING.

Christ's victory was a victory for the race, past as well as future. It broke down the gates of Hades and led captive a multitude of captives. The race-life, reaching the

plane of Divine manhood in Him, acquired power to quicken again to life the members of the race who were in bondage to death. But although this power was lodged without measure in the Risen Son of Man, and because He was the Son of Man, it was still germinal, and subject to the great law of propagation through a seed. Hence other elect sons of men were first quickened by it, who should also become partakers of the divine nature, taking part in the Christ's sufferings and travail for the sin of the world, and sharing with Him in the joy and glory of its redemption. Hence this was set before the first Christians as their distinctive calling—with Christ to suffer (Rom. viii, 17–23; Col. i, 24), with Him to be "baptized for the dead" (I Cor. xv, 29), with Him to reign, and to do even greater works than He did when on earth, because He had gone to the Father. Christ, in Christly men, is therefore continually repeating Himself in the work of the world's redemption. The elect seed are "filling up that which is behind of His sufferings," bearing each their part of the heritage of sin and infirmity and sorrow handed down from the past. And, as they rise to victory, they also set prisoners free and lead captivity captive.

In this view the operations of redemption that set free the past generations of the dead connect themselves closely with the work of redemption going on among the living. And there is no schism in the body of the elect seed—the appointed instruments of this deliverance. Those who have passed on to glory do their work in and through those of us who are still warring in the flesh. Of this law, Christ, the head over all, is the supreme example. He does nothing except through His members. The Son of Man works through sons of men. The Son of

God puts forth His saving energy through those who have received power from Him to become sons of God. As He lifts them up into life and liberty, so do they also lift up others. As in His resurrection He wrought wonders among the dead, so they also are sent to raise the dead. Whatever victories they win are not for themselves alone. They are "for His body's sake, the Church," and also for their kindred and all their human brethren among the dead. But the help they render them is along the fixed lines of life, and according to laws which prevail in all God's realms of life. The first of these laws is that vanished lives are saved from destruction and treasured up for reproduction and ultimate perfection through a seed. Whatever hope there is for their future rests here. If men reach the high grade of immortal life, it is because into the "seed of men" there was first put this potency, and because the choice member of the race who first reached this divine plane became a fructifying seed to others of His brethren, who, in their turn, transmit the life to others in widening circles until "all the families of the earth" are blessed.

MINISTRY AFTER DEATH.

The possibility of opportunities of usefulness after death helps us to understand the deep mystery of Divine Providence, when God cuts short the earthly career of one whose life, as man judges, is of priceless value to the Church or the home. The influence, the preaching, the ministrations, are not stopped, they are only transferred to another sphere, to be continued with intensified energy

under spiritual conditions, though no material ear may hear the voice, no mortal hand shall feel the touch.

It is no mere idle speculation of private judgment, at least if the archetype of humanity, the ideal and pattern Man, may be regarded as a model for us to follow in death as well as life. St. Peter tells us that with quickened powers Christ went and preached to certain spirits in Hades (I Peter iii, 19). Again he adds that He preached the gospel to dead men in general (iv, 6), for the absence of the definite article in the original involves this conclusion. It points to a continuity after death of the work which had been carried on in life. As in the flesh Christ gave Himself up to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation, so in His spirit, when it passed to the land of disembodied souls, He carried on the work which God had given Him to do. And if, as no one doubts, in His life upon earth He has left us an example that we should follow in His steps, it is very difficult to believe that He is not also the type of our life in the spirit in the unseen world. It deepens immeasurably the importance of our earthly training and pursuits to feel that nothing in this life that we do is temporal only, but all has its bearing on the eternity that is to follow.

There is evidence that that act of our Blessed Lord in preaching to the "spirits in prison" was so interpreted in the primitive Church, which is generally to be trusted as the best exponent of the teaching of Scripture.

The belief of these early Fathers lends distinct countenance to the thought that we shall exercise hereafter in the world of spirits under spiritual conditions those special ministries and peculiar graces which marked our earthly life and work.—*Canon Herbert M. Luckock, D. D.*

AN AMBIGUOUS VIEW.

An increasing number of people who have learned enough to have their faith shaken in the popular interpretation of the texts usually quoted in proof of endless pain fall back upon an agnostic position and say: "We are not able definitely to accept any theory of the future of man, because we do not see that anything has been unequivocally revealed. Enough has been disclosed to show to us that God is love, and we are content to believe that, happen what will, all will ultimately be shown to be the result of love divine."

It is impossible to avoid sympathy with much of this view at first sight, but only then; for when closely examined it is seen to be open to the charge of grave ambiguity or far worse. It may mean that in the future God will act as a loving human parent would, and then, I reply, this is precisely the larger hope. Again, it may mean a very different and a very dangerous thing. It may mean that at the last my ideas of right and wrong will undergo a complete change —that the things which I now pronounce with the fullest conviction to be cruel and vile will at that day seem righteous and just, and that thus God will be fully justified though He inflict endless torment. But take this statement to pieces and see what it really means. It means, in effect, practical scepticism. For what this view really tells me is that my deepest moral convictions are worthless as a standard, because that which they declare to be cruel and revolting, may be right and holy, and will so appear at the last. But if this be so, than I have lost my sole

measure of right and wrong. What is truth or goodness, I know not. They cease to be realities; they are, for aught I know, mere phantoms. Religion, therefore, becomes impossible. Conscience ceases to be a reliable guide. Revelation is a mere blank, for all revelation presupposes the *trustworthiness* of that moral sense to which it is addressed. Thus the above plea, plausible as it seems, is wholly ambiguous, and does in fact lead either to the larger hope, or to mere unbelief.

The question of the larger hope is usually argued on a basis altogether misleading. It is commonly stated as though the point involved were chiefly or wholly man's endless suffering. Awful and repulsive to every moral instinct as is that view of human destiny, it is not the real turning point in this controversy. The vital question is this: that the popular creed teaches the *perpetuity of evil*, points to a victorious devil, and to sin as finally triumphant over God. The popular creed makes the corrupt, nay the bestial in our fallen nature to be eternal; it makes the foul and loathsome as enduring as Heaven; it confers the dignity of immortality on moral rottenness; it erects a pandemonium side by side with Paradise; and pointing to its fœtid abysses, where blasphemy forever echoes, it is not afraid to call this the victory of the Cross!—*Rev. T. Allin.*

THE GENESIS OF IMMORTAL MAN.

The *New York Sun* of October 11th contains an able and lengthy digest of the views of Professor Joseph Le Conte on this subject, as set forth in his recent book en-

titled *Evolution and its Relation to Religious Thought.* What these views are may be gathered from the following extract:

The reader is reminded that with every new form of force, with every new birth of the universal energy into a higher plane, there are revealed new, unexpected, and, previously to experience, wholly unimaginable properties and power. The latest birth, man's spirit, is, of course, no exception. Why may not immortality be one of the new properties acquired with the advent of man? That it is one of them Prof. Le Conte deems probable in view of the relation of God to nature, which is expounded in the earlier chapters of his volume. Succinctly stated, the author's conception of that relation is that the forces of nature are naught else than different forms of the one omnipresent divine energy. As we have just seen, this divine omnipresent energy has taken on successively higher and higher forms in the course of cosmic time. This upward movement has been characterized by increasing individuation, not only of matter, but also of force. The universal divine energy in a generalized condition, unindividuated, diffused, pervading all nature, is what we call physical and chemical force. The same energy in a higher form, individuating matter, and itself individuated but as yet only very imperfectly, is what we call the life force of plants. The same energy more fully individuating matter, and itself more fully though not completely individuated, we call the *anima* of animals. This *anima*, or animal soul, as time went on was individuated more and more until it resembled and foreshadowed the spirit of man. Finally, in the spirit of man we are to recognize the same energy at last completely individuated as a separate entity, and consequently self-conscious, capable of separate existence, and, therefore, immortal.

According to the view here expounded, the vital principle of plants and the *anima* of animals are but different

stages of the pre-natal development of spirit in the womb of nature. In man at last it came to birth. In plants and animals it remained in deep embryo-sleep—in the latter quickened indeed, but not viable—still unconscious of self, incapable of independent life, linked in physical umbilical connection with nature. Now at last in man it is separated from nature, capable of independent life, born into a new and higher plane of existence. As the organic embryo at birth reaches independent material or temporal life, even so the spirit embryo by birth attains independent spiritual or eternal life. Not, indeed, that the separation or independence is complete so long as the spirit has its tenement in the human body. While that tenancy endures, nature is, it is true, no longer the gestative mother, but she is still the nursing mother of the spirit. We are weaned from her only by death.

What this view needs by way of supplement, in order to bring it more completely into harmony with revelation, is that the dependence of the human spirit upon nature as the "gestative mother" must continue until it develops those divine qualities of being which fit it for supremacy over nature. In other words, man must remain in the "bondage of corruption" to the creature until he is fitted for independent existence and dominion as a son of God. From this point of view we perceive how easy and natural is the explanation we have given of the "resurrection of judgment" as the restoration of the imperfect dead to earthly life through the process of a repeated natural birth.

THE DIVINE JUDGMENTS.—The vision of blessedness in Scripture is frequently and significantly connected with the divine judgments. For the largest hope has the greatest

readiness to admit the certainty of retribution, because the path of healing is very often through stern penalty. It is but a poor and shallow theology—a theology which I would emphatically repudiate and disclaim—that makes light of sin and retribution, or seeks to explain away the stern and awful side of God's dealings; yet there is a theology more shallow and more false still than this, a theology that severs God's judgments *anywhere*, in any whit, from His love; that thus divides God against Himself; that forgets the fundamental truth embodied in the Psalmist's striking words: "O Lord, unto Thee belongeth mercy; for Thou renderest unto every man according to his works."—*The Rev. T. Allin in "Redemption; its true extent."*

A Duplicity.—The common excuse urged in vindication of the justice of an eternal punishment is that the victim of it will eternally sin, and that eternal sin must bring with it eternal suffering. And yet the texts quoted to sustain this doctrine of everlasting punishment, as, *e. g.*, Matthew xxv, 31–46, plainly show that the punishment, whatever it may be, and however long it may last, is inflicted for the sins of this life.

"Still Thy love, O Christ, arisen,
Yearns to reach those souls in prison;
Through all depths of sin and loss,
Drops the plummet of Thy cross;
Never yet abyss was found
Deeper than that cross could sound."

—*John G. Whittier.*

NOTES ON CURRENT TOPICS.

THE REVISION MUDDLE.—The Presbyteries throughout the land are now wrestling with the problem of Revision as presented in the report of the General Assembly's Committee, upon which they are required to give an opinion. It is lamentable to see the muddle and conflict into which they are being thrown in the vain effort to stretch themselves, with their larger views of the gospel, upon the short and iron bed of the Westminster Confession. The Presbytery of Chester leads off with the assertion that the lame attempts at improvement by the Committee prove that the Confession cannot be successfully revised, and declares in favor of abandoning all effort in that direction, and for the preparation of a short and succinct statement of doctrine in harmony with, and explanatory of the standards. The Presbytery of Cleveland, which voted strongly two years ago in favor of revision, now concludes that the task is hopeless, and expresses itself in favor of a new Confession much more brief, and less philosophic and dogmatic. The Presbytery of St. Louis expressed its commendation of the wise and conservative work of the Committee and its approval of the proposed changes in the main. Many other Presbyteries approve, with exceptions and additions more or less important. The Presbytery of Rochester wants the clause in Chapter III, "God hath predestinated some of mankind unto eternal life," changed so as to read, "predestinated a multitude whom no man can number." It also rejects the Committee's "futile attempt to cast a softening veil over the odious doctrine of preterition," and demands that all the sections which set forth in any way that "the rest of mankind God was pleased to pass by and to ordain to dishonor and wrath" shall be wiped out clean and forever from the Presbyterian creed.

All this confusion, which must inevitably be "worse confounded," is due to the fact that from the outset of this business the Church has steadfastly closed its eyes and refused to look its real trouble in the face. Many of its wisest men know that the heart of the difficulty with the Confession lies in its narrow and bitter and damnatory eschatology, and yet scarcely one of them has

had the courage to put his finger upon the really sore spot. Not one of its Presbyteries asked for revision there. So long as their Confession teaches that the just and proper doom of all mankind was to an endless torment of body and soul in the quenchless fires of an eternal hell, and that God in sovereign grace decreed to save a portion of the race and to leave all but the chosen ones to suffer this awful punishment, all their efforts to reconcile these statements with the Scriptural doctrine of the fatherhood of God, and that He is Love, will be utterly futile. And so long as the promised resurrection of all mankind, as the result of Christ's atoning work, is degraded into an arrangement by which an immense portion of the race is recovered from death and continued in existence only that they may suffer eternally, so long will that Confession resist and mock all attempts to reconcile it with the large and free provisions of the gospel of the grace of God.

The trouble with our Presbyterian brethren is that they will not see, or, seeing, they will not confess, that God's electing grace, which is plainly taught in the Bible, was never meant to terminate upon the first and present subjects of it, but that the very purpose of the election of these is that they may become the executors of His wider purpose of blessing to all mankind, both living and dead. They will not see that the "Church of the first-born" implies later born, and that if "of His own will begat He us by the word of truth that we might be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures" (Jas. i, 14), we cannot be a first-fruits unless there is to be a subsequent harvest. Many in that Church have come to see something of this plan of ages, which does not leave God's redeeming work finished with the winding up of this present world, and to discern something of this wideness of His mercy. Hence their unrest under the incubus of a Confession framed by men who knew not this mystery. But, as we have said, all their efforts to rid themselves of this burden and to shake off these fetters will be useless unless they give up their false and degrading conception that there is no hope in God's scheme of grace for any class of men who have died in their sins, and admit that the very purpose of Christ's resurrection from the dead was to break the bonds of even *their* captivity in death. The reason of their

dread of this idea is that they see in it no logical escape from universalism. And there *is* no logical escape from the kind of universalism of which we speak elsewhere. It is couched in all the terms by which the Bible sets forth its gospel for all mankind. But when one comes to see that the final salvation of each individual man created in God's image does not involve the rescue from destruction of every personality in which that image may be clothed in its progress toward perfection, the danger of universalism is at once avoided, and the way of reconciliation is found between the orthodox teaching that the ungodly must perish, with the equally pronounced universalistic teaching of Scripture that "the grace of God bringeth salvation unto all men," and that "His mercy endureth forever."

A VINDICATION.—When, more than five years ago, we moved in the Presbytery of West Jersey an Overture to the General Assembly, requesting that body to appoint a committee to revise the eschatology of the Confession, we stated that a large number of the ministers were placed in a dishonest position by being obliged to subscribe and defend statements which they no longer heartily believed. This was then branded as a slander of the brethren. The present discussions in the Presbyteries are our vindication. For example, the *Presbyterian* says that the discussion in the Presbytery of Troy drew out "more radical avowals of unbelief in the Westminster Theology than we have seen in any other quarter." A number voted in favor of abandoning the attempt to revise the old creed, which was declared to be outworn and "dust-covered," and for a new creed. Upon which the *Presbyterian* makes this comment.

"The chasm between the theology of the majority and the theology of the minority was seen to be a very wide one, and the fact was plainly revealed that those who are calling for a 'Short Creed' are by no means agreed as to the points which shall enter into that creed. One thing is certain, that if they can write it, it will be very 'broad.'"

DR. BRIGGS' TRIAL.—The Presbytery of New York, by a vote of 64 to 62, has decided to go on with the trial of Dr. Briggs. If the

matter had been left to his clerical brethren, however, quite a majority of these by their votes would have dismissed the case. The *New York Sun*, in commenting upon this fact, remarks very justly that it is the laymen who are usually the most irreconcilable in such matters, because they know the least about them. Clergymen are generally scholars; and scholars are more tolerant of brother-scholars, because they are more familiar with the range of investigation over which such a man as Dr. Briggs must have traveled before arriving at his conclusions. They know better the difficulties that have to be met in this field, the enmities that have to be overcome and the force of the considerations to which a conscientious student is compelled to give heed.

Christian Unity.—At the late Pan-Methodist Council in Washington, Dr. Selby, in discussing Christian Unity, said:

"Do not let us bewail the fact that people will think, and think, too, behind the parson's back and without his oversight or permission, and that the mediæval unity of faith which was founded on ignorance is passing away. Out of the very freedom and independence of religious thought and the impact of debate and the ferment of controversy God will bring a better and more enduring accord, and glorify Himself as the true source of unity. Away with official pedagogy and leadership, and let the spiritual eye correct error. There is a unity of which boot and screw and fetter are the insignia that is the direct product of force, that can scarcely be called Christian. The unity of the faith commended to us from some quarters is not unlike a tree long dead, the limbs of which are held together by chains and staples. It does not spring from the possession of a common, all-penetrating life, but it is pieced together by decrees, official dogma, over-driven arguments, State-enforced sanction. We dishonor all the potentialities of God's Spirit within us when we bring hammer and staple and chain and grappling-hook into play."

A Christian Hero's View.—The hero of the Sedan—the late General Gordon—has this to say of that view of God which underlies the common doctrine of future punishment:

"Nothing can be more abject and miserable than the usual conception of God. Imagine to yourself what pleasure it would be to Him to burn us, or to torture us. Can we believe any human

being capable of creating us for such a purpose? We credit God with attributes which are utterly hateful to the meanest of men. . . . I say that Christian Pharisees deny Christ. A hard, cruel set they are, from high to low. When one thinks of the real agony one has gone through in consequence of false teaching, it makes human nature angry with the teachers who have added to the bitterness of life."

SCIENCE AND RELIGION.—The *Open Court* well says: "Science is not dangerous to religion, and clear thought is not against the teachings of Christ. Science is dangerous to superstitions and clear thought is incompatible with many dogmas and conceptions which are upheld at present by the Christian Churches. The dogmatist rightly shuns the light of science, but the religious man—that is, he who wants truth unadulterated and is ready to conform to truth—to live it and to act according to his best knowledge of truth, he will not lose his religion but purify it through thought and scientific exactness of thought."

FUTURE HOPES.—The *Spectator*, in speaking of the kind of heaven to which men look forward, asserts that it should be one in which the hope for self is merged in the hope of the elevation of the common life of humanity. It says:

"It appears to us that, in some important respects, the words of Lowell, 'Tis Heaven must come, not we must go,' point to a deeper truth than the vision of some far-off Heaven where the beloved dead are hidden away from human trouble. There can be no question, surely, that this is more in accordance with the language of the New Testament than any old-fashioned orthodox anticipation of Heaven. What all need is a more persistent conciousness of a common life. We do attain this at moments, and at very opposite moments. Sometimes in perfect health, sometimes in the weakness of illness; sometimes in great joy, and sometimes in great sorrow, we feel, as it were, the barriers of our individuality fall away, and a rising tide of human oneness flood the rock-pools which yet in this inundation lose nothing but their separateness. It is not that our individuality is less distinct; in looking back we see that we have never been more *ourselves* than when, in some mysterious way, *self* seems to lose its meaning. It is that we have attained at these moments some sense of the root-life beneath our branch-life."

THE METHODIST GENERAL COUNCIL, lately held in Washington, was a notable proof of the wonderful progress of this denomina-

tion, not only in numbers, but in intellectual and spiritual vigor. Their recent discussions of the relation of science and religion, of Biblical criticism and kindred topics show that they are fully abreast of the foremost Christian bodies in ability to appreciate and deal with the vital questions of the day. The Methodist Church has always been noted for producing able platform speakers. It has generally been regarded as behind in scholarship and culture. But this notion has to be abandoned in the face of such proofs to the contrary as these debates furnish.

A principal reason of the wonderful success of the Methodist Church and of its growing culture and piety has been that, with all its theological defects, it has ever insisted upon the universality of the relation which all human souls bear to the common Father, and that His grace is for all. It has made salvation to consist in personal contact and fellowship of man with God, and has insisted that such living contact is accessible to all, because there is the germ of a divine nature in all. This contact, even when imperfectly realized, has wonderful power to uplift and invigorate and mold men for high uses.

Dr. Patton on Future Probation.—The *New York Evangelist* of October 15th published an address of President Patton, made in 1887, before a religious society among the college students, in which he discussed the Andover view as to Probation in its bearing upon foreign missions. We are not surprised to find that it is not wholly consistent with itself. Dr. Patton, with the breadth of view and sympathy which his learning and culture give, finds it hard to be consistent with Dr. Patton, the pledged defender of a narrow theological system. He says, for instance, "We continually see men going into the other world imperfect; they must be imperfect when they reach there, and need some time for restoration or change." He says also that "there is no doctrine which is put in jeopardy by the simple affirmation of this belief." At the same time, "while he does not want to believe in the everlasting destruction of the heathen," who have never heard of Christ, he argues that Scripture compels this belief. He says also, with reference to the effect of this doctrine, that "if the Christian Church should come practically to a belief that the

heathen world will have the opportunity of hearing the gospel in a more economical way (hear it by preachers who do not need large salaries, an expensive board of foreign missions, and a great evangelistic system with immense cost, and a foreign debt of $100,000), when the Church gets hold of the idea that you can evangelize the heathen *when they are dead*, you might preach until the crack of doom, and you would not send out many more missionaries into the field."

It is this absurd idea that you can *evangelize men when they are dead!* that bars out such men as Dr. Patton from the light on this subject, and prevents them from following the leadings of their own minds and the promptings of their hearts toward a larger hope.

The view to which we have arrived of the resurrection of the unjust, as their re-introduction to an earthly life, removes all the difficulties in this matter of a future probation. We have found that Scripture teaches that there are but two forms of manhood in which men can live again—the earthy and the heavenly. If they are not fitted for the heavenly they must come back to life as earthy men, and there is but one way by which they can reach again this plane of life—the way of natural birth.

The resurrection of that large class of mankind is their re-incarnation. It follows therefore that the only sphere of life in which men can be saved and lifted up into eternal life is this earthly sphere. It is here and now that the gospel must be preached to them. They "must be judged *according to men in the flesh*" through the searching power of the gospel, before they can "live unto God in the spirit."

Present and future probation are thus seen to be one. The trial is always here, under the conditions of this flesh-and-blood humanity. Whatever hadean preaching is to be done for the liberation and perfection of human souls must be done here and now, whether at home or in foreign lands.

This doctrine, with the doctrine of the saving power that resides in the elect members of the race that reach divine manhood, and who become saviours of their brethren, is what is now needed to solve the missionary problem and to infuse new and divine energy into the work of the Church at home and abroad.